

Critical Medical Supplies Collected for Tsunami Victims

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH), Healthcare Association of Hawaii, Hawaii Medical Association, Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, Aloha Airlines, Department of Defense (DOD), State Civil Defense and Hawaii's hospitals statewide have teamed together to collect critically needed medicines and medical supplies for victims of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami disaster.

Health Director Chiyoame Fukino, M.D., said, "Hospitals statewide have been generous with their time and efforts to collect medicines and medical supplies they could spare immediately. Hawaii is in a good position to provide these critically needed items and we are grateful for the teamwork and support given by the healthcare community, private and public partners."

Rich Meiers, President of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii said, "I am very pleased with the quick response of our Healthcare Association hospitals and nursing homes throughout the state who donated the much needed medications and supplies for use in the tsunami disaster area."

On January 10, Aloha Airlines provided airlift for hundreds of pounds of medicine and medical supplies donated by hospitals on Kauai, Maui and the Big Island of Hawaii, so the supplies could be rushed to Honolulu for evaluation, sorting and packing by the DOH. A first shipment of supplies went out this morning to the U.S. Naval Hospital Ship Mercy for transport to the disaster area.

"Aloha is doing its part by volunteering to move medical supplies and pharmaceuticals as quickly as possible on our overnight cargo flights between the Islands," said Aloha President and CEO David A. Banmiller. "The men and women of Aloha's Cargo Department were eager to respond to the State's request to help provide relief to people in the stricken areas."

Paula Arcena, Executive Director, Hawaii Medical Association said, "Hawaii physicians are also stepping forward to be part of an emergency pool of medical staff available if the disaster response requests their support."

The effort to collect medicines and medical supplies from hospitals around the state was mounted by the Hawaii State Department of Health and the Healthcare Association of Hawaii.

Lt. Governor James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr., will meet next week with the consul generals of the nations affected by the earthquake and tsunami to determine what additional assistance the State of Hawai'i can provide. The meetings follow-up on letters of condolence and support Governor Linda Lingle sent to the leaders of each nation.

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